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A BRIEF STATEMENT ISSUED BY NORWICH MEETING

This meeting having issued a Testimony 11 mo., 21, 1877, in which was shown the principal causes which led to the separation from us of a portion of our members, we give below a brief statement of the interruption to the transaction of the business of our meetings for Discipline, and of the manner in which the said separation was brought to pass, for the information of friends and to correct unfounded reports.

Among the applicants for membership with Friends there were some persons who had adopted the erroneous views alluded to in the Testimony above mentioned, and were not convinced of the religious principles held by Friends; neither were they concerned to observe, or uphold, the testimonies which were the outgrowth of those principles. One of the applicants belonged to the Masonic Order, and professed that he could see nothing wrong in the institution. All the applicants were received, excepting in cases of manifest obstruction. But a portion of our members would not consent that any one of them should be rejected, therefore such cases were for a time deferred for future consideration.

At our Monthly held 9 mo. 13. 1876, a request for membership was forwarded from the Women's Meeting, with a minute endorsed on it, saying "We are united in receiving the within if you concur. Some objections on account of a musical instrument." Many Friends thought such a case should be returned at once to the Women's Meeting. Others urged that action should be taken and the applicant received into membership. While the discussion was going on, another request came from the Women's Meeting [this one from a music teacher] with two reports appended to it from the committee that had been appointed in her case. One of these reports stated that she was convinced of Friend's principles and recommended her reception. The other asserted that she was not convinced of Friends principles and advised that the request be returned. After much controversy, both cases were returned to the Women's Meeting.

At our Monthly Meeting held in 10 mo. the Women's Meeting again forwarded both the requests alluded to, asking advice in the matter. The minute made on the occasion is a fitting description, "Women Friends having asked the advice of this Meeting with reference to the business presented from their own, after much discussion the subject was deferred." The Meeting was adjourned to the next fourth day at the rise of the Meeting for worship. At the adjourned session after much discussion, the following minute was made, "The subject before us from the Women's Meeting was deferred to our next Meeting. Adjourned to the usual time next month.

At our Meeting in 11th mo. the queries were answered and representatives appointed to attend the Quarterly Meeting and notice being taken of the attendance from a Monthly Meeting of a Friend in the ministry, and her companion; after which the following minute occurs, "The business before us from the Women's Meeting, which was deferred at our last Meeting, claiming attention, the Meeting was not united as to the course to be pursued." The Meeting was adjourned to the rise of the Meeting for worship the next fourth day. At the adjourned session held on the 15th a minute was made as follows, "The request of — presented from the Women's Meeting and deferred to this time, was read. The Meeting was so divided in sentiment as to be incapable of transacting the business claiming its attention, according to our order and discipline. Therefore it was adjourned to the usual time next month.

In consideration of such a state of things, it was made in the last named meeting (2d mo. 1877) that we were doing business; which suspension would be a condition before the Yearly Meeting was conceded to, and consequently no report was made at the Quarterly Meeting, neither were they appointed to attend it.

In taking such a step (as a matter of course) Friends were deeply sensible that it was better to err in being than to prove that we had proved so utterly abortive of good.

At the Quarterly Meeting, which was held the same month, many of the members of the Meeting expressed great concern on the subject, terming it insubordination to the Yearly Meeting, and asserted that they were thereby disqualified for taking part in the Quarterly Meeting. To which Norwich Friends replied that if their privileges as members were thereby disqualified for acting in accordance to discipline, Quarterly Meeting would be held of two or more Monthly Meetings. But the Yearly Meeting over-ruled, and proceeded to undertake to labor with Norwich Monthly Meeting, as will appear by the following minute which was introduced into a deep consideration, being no official account from Norwich Monthly Meeting which resulted in appointing the following Committee of Enquiry with instructions to render advice as they may deem best and report to the next Meeting." Taken from the Minutes, Vol. 1, p. 10.

There were nine of that committee appointed, all attended our Monthly in 3rd Mo., 1877, at the foregoing minute, having previously been appointed to appear before them with the record of the Meeting, but were told by him that they were not the proper course being, as he (the Clerk) reported to the Monthly Meeting, to first present the record of the meeting and obtain its official recognition. In investigating they laid severe censures on the Meeting, asserting that the wrong rested at his door in not forwarding a report to the Quarterly Meeting. They informed them that he was not directed to do so. They asked him various questions, as to what minority hindered the reports to the Quarterly Meeting. He replied that he did not know, and presented from the course that had been pursued by the Yearly Meeting at last proposed that he should resign.

In the Monthly Meeting the Committee of Enquiry into the cause of the disunity in the Yearly Meeting proposed the reading of its minute to the Yearly Meeting.

But in the attempt that was made to read the business many of the Committee bore witness to such expression as showed them that they were not united in exercising such confidence in the Yearly Meeting, and want of courtesy toward them. Therefore the Committee to which these remarks do not apply, was not united in exercising such confidence in the Yearly Meeting.

After two sessions of the meeting the Yearly Meeting spent said Committee insisted that the friends

STATEMENT

MEETING OF FRIENDS, ONTARIO, CAN.

on of such a state of things a proposition at named meeting (2nd Mo 7th) to suspend which suspension would ultimately bring our the Yearly Meeting, which proposition was consequently no reports were forwarded to ting, neither were there any representatives l it.

h a step (as a matter of expediency) many ly sensible that it was not right, but that it n doing than to prolong a discussion which ly abortive of good.

erly Meeting, which was held at Pelham in many of the members of Pelham Monthly l great concern on account of such non-re ing it insubordination, and contempt, of the t, and asserted that Norwich members were d for taking part in the business of the . To which Norwich Friends replied, that as members were disallowed the Meeting was d for acting in an official capacity, for, ac- oe, Quarterly Meetings should be composed nthly Meetings. But the members of Pel- r-ruled, and proceeding with the business with Norwich Monthly Meeting for delia- pear by the following minute: "This Meet- d into a deep concern on account of there account from Norwich Monthly Meeting, appointing the following Friends a Commit- h instructions to render such service and ac- eem best and report to our next Quarterly from the Minutes, William Spencer, Clerk. e of that committee (names omitted) who nthly in 3rd Mo., 1877, and presented the having previously summoned our Clerk them with the records of the Monthly Meet- by him that they were out of order. Their g, as he (the Clerk) was the servant of the to first present their credentials to that its official recognition. But without mak- ey laid severe censures upon said Clerk, as- rong rested at his door, that he was remiss a report to the Quarterly Meeting. But he t he was not directed by the meeting to do m various questions, one in particular as to ndered the reports going to the Quarterly ied that he did not know that any one dis- urse that had been perused. The Commit- t that he should resign his office as Clerk. ly Meeting the Committee made no direct use of the disunity in the meeting, not even ending of its minutes in reference thereto. ttempt that was made in the meeting to do the Committee being so imprudent as to ion as showed them to be partizans. After- and that the meeting should leave the deci- matter to them. And as the meeting was ising such confidence they complained of a toward them. There were two of that Com- e remarks do not apply.

sions of the meeting had been unprofitably ee insisted that the following be entered on

Yearly Meeting. That committee, virtually, received their own report, and acting upon it, appointed themselves representatives to the Yearly Meeting and took steps towards the establish- ment of a Preparative and Monthly Meeting at Milldale, with- in the limits of Norwich Monthly Meeting.

In seventh month, the meeting for worship was greatly disturbed and that for discipline opened in a disorderly man- ner. As in time past the meeting had not been able to transact the business in unity. The Clerk at once informed the meet- ing that it was the usual time for the appointment of a commit- tee to propose to the ensuing Monthly Meeting the names of Friends to serve as Clerks and Overseers the coming year. Names for that committee were offered in rapid succession, ap- parently for the purpose of having persons appointed who would favor the views of the nominators. But, before the Clerk had time to form the requisite minute, objections were raised to doing business in that unbecoming manner, as not to the honor of Truth, which, meeting with response in many minds, corresponding expression was given. The names had been offered but the appointments not confirmed. Some con- tended that as both parties had offered names and no objections had been made until all were nominated, it was an act of full unity, only reversible by the entire unity of the meeting. Friends taking the opposite view considered there could be no unity in strife, therefore not the united act of the meeting.

After considerable discussion the Clerk read the following: "The time for which the Clerks and Overseers were appointed having nearly expired, an attempt was made to appoint a com- mittee to consider of and propose names of Friends, to serve the meeting as Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Overseers for the en- suing year. Several names were offered, but the appoint- ment of such committee was strongly objected to by several Friends on the ground that the meeting was not in a position to do business, and accordingly the appointment was dropped." Then adjourned to the usual time next month, some of the members declaring themselves dissatisfied with the adjourn- ment remained in the house.

At a meeting in 8th month a part of the Pelham commit- tee attended, having previously examined the records of the last meeting, together with the minutes made with pencil in the meeting, discovered an unfinished minute, which they de- clared to be the one binding on the meeting, advised its adop- tion and the erasure of the one recorded. How they could judge of the act of the meeting by an unfinished minute is not easy to conjecture, they not having been personally at the meet- ing. This interference of the committee being objected to, after some uncomfortable discussion the meeting adjourned.

Some members remained in the house and proceeded to organize what they styled Norwich Monthly Meeting, the committee remaining with them in violation of their own form- er advice, advised and encouraged those members in the mea- sure above described.

The Monthly Meeting in 9th month was so disturbed by those who had set up a new Meeting that after the opening minute was read, Friends remained quiet until the others with- drew, when the queries were answered and representatives ap- pointed to the Quarterly Meeting.

At the Quarterly Meeting held at Pelham in 9th month, the Clerk, after calling the names of the representatives from Pelham Monthly Meeting and recording their attendance, called for the report of the committee in reference to Norwich Monthly

acting the business claiming its attention, according to our order and discipline. Therefore it was adjourned to the usual time next month.

At the Meeting held in the 12th. month, a joint committee of men and women Friends were appointed in each of the two requests that had been forwarded by Women Friends.

At this time the Men's Meeting concurred with the Women in receiving into membership three other persons who had made application, there being no manifest obstructions to their reception. Further business was deferred and the meeting adjourned.

At our Monthly Meeting in First Month, 1877, a minute was made as follows: A portion of the Joint Committee in ——— case made a report which the meeting was not united in accepting. Not being able to proceed with the business before us the meeting was adjourned to meet at the rise of our next Preparative Meeting. At the adjourned session held 2nd Mo 7, a proposal of marriage was admitted and forwarded after which the following minute appears: "Not being able to proceed in unity with the remaining business of the meeting a proposition was made and united with to adjourn." The meeting was then adjourned to the usual time next month.

It is meet to describe more clearly what those differences were, or rather the view taken by the respective parties.

One portion held that the Society of Friends had ever maintained a testimony against *artificial music*, and to admit a person into membership who was in the practice thereof would commit the Monthly Meeting to a compromise of principle and that they felt conscientiously scrupulous in the maintenance of our testimonies. Another portion maintained that the applicant or applicants was or were converted, and a child or children of God, and therefore ought to be received. And even went so far as to assert that their future well-being was contingent on their reception into membership. They also asserted that it was to them a matter of indifference whether parties engaged in music or not, as they considered there was no principle involved in it. The one portion held that church fellowship was designed for mutual strength and edification; and that difference in thought and action could not contribute to that end, and that to have the name enrolled on the church books was not essential to salvation.

Propositions were made and urged by one part of the meeting to lay the subject before the Quarterly Meeting, but the other part claimed that according to discipline the receiving persons into membership was business that pertained solely to the Monthly Meeting, and that the subject was neither weighty nor difficult, the trouble being in the Monthly Meeting itself, the members being so utterly divided in sentiment. Even in attempting to carry out such proposition no unity could be arrived at in regard to the manner in which the subject or subjects should be laid before the Quarterly Meeting.

During the discussions the Clerk was frequently urged by one party to take the sense of the meeting and that he should base his decision upon the weight of numbers, and claimed that the judgment of age and experience was entitled to no more deference in the deliberations of the meeting than of those more recently brought into the fold.

Such were the principal arguments made use of during the painful discussions that took place. In fact all arguments were exhausted and then again, and again, re-asserted. One feature in the discussions were, that one party had much more to say than the other, and more speakers engaged in it, hence, the expression so often made use of, that a few persons rule the meeting, whilst much of personality and epithet was indulged in.

mittee to which these remarks do not apply. After two sessions of the meeting spent said Committee insisted that the first minutes: "It was advised by the Quarterly Meeting that we adjourn. It was further resolved that when we meet as a Monthly Meeting cause we cannot proceed with the business unity we forthwith adjourn."

It will here be noticed that this same course that seemed to awaken sympathy with the members of Pelham Monthly Meeting the authority of a Quarterly Meeting. At the meeting on that occasion the Committee stated distinctly that they were *Monthly Meeting*, and when told that such was the Quarterly Meeting, replied, *we will*

In 4th and 5th Months no business was transacted, the forwarding a marriage through it, and issuing a removal certificate on behalf of

At the Preparative Meeting in 6th Month was manifested to answering the Quarterly Meeting minute was made and forwarded to the Clerk. "After an attempt being made to read it was discontinued because protested against by members." At our Monthly Meeting in 7th Month great also was the opposition, that the Clerk made: "Information was received from the Quarterly Meeting that the queries were not answered frequently the reading of them was not. No Representatives were appointed, Friends proceeding with the business. Take notice of Jonathan H. Roger, Clerk." The principle of answering the queries was founded on the authority of the Quarterly Meeting, and under dealing by the Quarterly Meeting, a situation for doing business.

The above minute of the Monthly Meeting was read to the Quarterly Meeting, (which was held in the same month) and read by the Clerk. The Clerk raised as to whether the members of the Quarterly Meeting had any right to participate in the Monthly Meeting. The Clerk at once took the negative, from which many Friends were provoked. The Clerk ruled it to be the business of the Quarterly Meeting, and that Norwich Friends take no part in it. An alternative was presented either to a meeting that the members of that meet business of the Quarterly Meeting. Such a false statement, as the report in question the minutes of the meeting, and attested by the Clerk, which rendered it official.

The members of Norwich Monthly Meeting were deprived of their just rights by the illegal exercise by the Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting members of Pelham Monthly Meeting, all from that meeting, one of whom (being the Clerk) dissented from the course pursued. From Pelham then, as the act of the Quarterly Meeting, the case of Norwich Monthly Meeting was delayed three months longer, thereby to prevent

se remarks do not apply.
ions of the meeting had been unprofitably
so insisted that the following be entered on
as advised by the Quarterly Meetings' Com-
ourn. It was further advised by said Com-
e meet as a Monthly Meeting, if from any
roceed with the business of the meeting in
adjourn."

he noticed that this Committee advised the
seemed to awaken such deep concern with
of Pelham Monthly Meeting while assuming
Quarterly Meeting. Before the adjournment
that occasion the Committee threatened the
Monthly Meeting; also, after the close of the
ously had with the Clerk, one of the Com-
minctly that *they would lay down Norwich*
and when told that such an act would destroy
ing, replied, *we will establish another.*

h Months no business was transacted, save
marriage through its remaining stages and
ertificate on behalf of a member.

ative Meeting in 6th month, such opposition
answering the Queries that the following
and forwarded to the Monthly Meeting.
being made to read and answer the queries
because protested against by a number of
r Monthly Meeting in the same month so
opposition, that the following minute was
tion was received from the Preparative Meet-
s were not answered in that meeting, conse-
g of them was not proceeded with in this.
were appoited, Friends not being united in
the business. Taken from the Minutes.
r, Clerk." The principal reason for not an-
was founded on the plea that we were
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g business.

ute of the Monthly Meeting was presented
eting, (which was held at Norwich in the
read by the Clerk. The question was then
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right to participate in the business of the
t. The Clerk at once gave his judgment in
which many Friends dissented; after some
erk ruled it to be the judgment of the meet-
Friends take no part in the business. But the
esented either to allow Norwich Friends
meeting, or to reject the report from Nor-
The latter course being pursued, a minute
hat no official report had been received from
Meeting, and it was the judgment of the
members of that meeting take no part in the
arterly Meeting. Said minute containing a
the report in question was an extract from
meeting, and attested by the signature of its
red it official.

of Norwich Monthly Meeting were thus de-
t rights by the illegal and arbitrary power
Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting and six other
n Monthly Meeting, there being but eight in
ing, one of whom (being one of the commit-
n the course pursued. Those seven members
as the act of the Quarterly Meeting, contin-
rich Monthly Meeting under their care for
er, thereby to prevent its going before the

the Clerk, after calling the names of the representatives from
Adam Monthly Meeting and recording their attendance, called
for the report of the committee in reference to Norwich Monthly
Meeting, which was objected to as contrary to good order
for a meeting to transact business previous to its proper organ-
ization, there being representatives from Norwich Monthly
Meeting, also a report from that meeting on the table yet un-
read. Most of the Pelham members contended that Norwich
Monthly Meeting was still under dealings and not entitled to a
hearing until after its case was decided, and in order to give such
decision the report of the committee must first be read, thus
assuming the unheard of precedent that one Monthly Meeting
has the right of exercising the functions of a Quarterly Meet-
ing and deal with another Monthly Meeting. The result was
the reading of said report and the minutes of the newly set up
meeting were received as emanating from Norwich Monthly
Meeting.

Five of the Pelham committee attended Norwich Meeting
in 8th month, counselled a separation and aided in affecting it.
Eight of them signed a report advising that the newly set up
Meeting be accepted as the true one. One of that committee
refused to sign said report, and the members of Pelham Month-
ly Meeting gave decision in the matter, by which act Pelham
Monthly Meeting identified itself and entered into official re-
lationship with those who have separated from Norwich Month-
ly Meeting, and thereby became separatists themselves. It be-
ing the time for the appointment of Clerks the representatives
from Norwich Monthly Meeting having conferred together pro-
posed Adam Spencer for Clerk, and William B. Stover for As-
sistant, which being approved they were appointed to those ser-
vices for one year. After which Friends remained quiet until
the others left the house when the business of the Quarterly
Meeting was proceeded with.

We are persuaded that the assumption of the whole con-
trol of the Quarterly Meeting by members of Pelham Monthly
Meeting and the appointment of said committee was not ac-
cording to the mind of Truth, and that the action of said mem-
bers and their committee did not tend to the healing of breaches
but to hasten a separation.

The whole aim and object of those who have separated
from us seemed to be to commit the Monthly Meeting to the
official acknowledgement of the erroneous views set forth in
our Testimony and to the sanction of practices contrary to the
the order and discipline of our religious society. Therefore
the alternative was before us, either to abandon the meet-
ing to those errors and their attendant evils, or to "con-
tend for the faith once delivered to the Saints," and for the
maintenance of order and discipline.

The spirit of controversy manifested by those who have
thus separated was not confined to meetings for discipline, but
those for worship have frequently been scenes of confusion.
Utterances in the line of the Ministry have been replied to, crit-
icised and misinterpreted to the dishonor of Truth. But by the
step they have taken they have borne testimony that they are
not of us; therefore the Religious Society of Friends as far as
it is represented by Norwich Monthly Meeting is not responsi-
ble for their doings.

In thus reviewing these painful occurrences, we are solemn-
ly reminded of the words of the Apostle, "Be not high-minded
but fear." May we be dignified as an approach to a throne of
grace is afforded to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," in the
assurance that "they shall prosper that love thee."

By direction of the aforesaid Meeting held Fourth
Month, 10th, 1878.

ADAM SPENCER, CLERK.